



# STUDENT WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact Abbotsford Primary School on 9428 5977.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students and members of our school community understand:

- (a) our commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students
- (b) expectations of positive student behaviour
- (c) support available to students and families
- (d) our school's policies and procedures for responding to inappropriate student behaviour.

Abbotsford Primary School is committed to providing a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for all students. We understand that students reach their full potential only when they are happy, healthy and safe, and that a positive school culture, where student participation is encouraged and valued, helps to engage students and support them in their learning. Our school acknowledges that student wellbeing and student learning outcomes are closely linked.

The objective of this policy is to support our school to create and maintain a safe, supportive and inclusive school environment consistent with our school's values.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all school activities, including camps and excursions.

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1. School profile
2. School values, philosophy and vision
3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies
4. Identifying students in need of support
5. Student rights and responsibilities
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## POLICY

### 1. School profile

Abbotsford Primary School is an internationally recognised Chinese/English Bilingual School, located in the diverse and vibrant inner suburb of Abbotsford. It was established in 1877 and has recently emerged from an \$8.28million complete school refurbishment, where traditional classrooms have been remodelled into open-plan learning communities.

Our students undertake 50 per cent of their learning in Chinese and 50 per cent of their learning in English, developing a passion for language learning and a greater understanding of different cultures. Where timetabling allows, Chinese and English are taught every day of the school week.

Abbotsford Primary School has students and families from many cultures and backgrounds. More than 60 per cent of our students have a language background other than English. The staff are a team of highly enthusiastic and knowledgeable teachers that are 'diverse' in our teaching approaches. Our students learn in a supportive and caring environment. We are recognised for our commitment to developing the whole child, whether that is their academic, social or emotional learning.

We provide a comprehensive learning program that includes Visual Arts, Performing Arts/Music, Physical Education, Science and Digital Technologies (Years 3-6). Core subjects including Mathematics and Integrated Studies are taught in both Chinese and English, ensuring that students develop bi-literacy for a wide range of academic contexts.

Our caring and supportive learning environment is strengthened with our Art Therapy program and Speech Therapy Assistance. Abbotsford Primary School is a Respectful Relationships school, and we promote and model respect, positive attitudes and behaviours. We focus on teaching our students how to build healthy relationships, resilience and confidence. We have a Student Wellbeing Coordinator to support students and parents. Student voice and agency is highly valued at Abbotsford Primary School where students take responsibility for organising and facilitating various clubs and the Junior School Council.

### 2. School values, philosophy and vision

Abbotsford Primary School's Statement of Values and School Philosophy is integral to the work that we do and is the foundation of our school community. Students, staff and members of our school community are encouraged to live and demonstrate our core values of Care, Connectedness, Curiosity and Challenge at every opportunity.

Abbotsford Primary School has the ambitious aim of offering the best Chinese/English bilingual education globally. This is because the school firmly believes that every child in Australia deserves a bilingual education, for all the additional , cognitive, social , emotional and economic benefits that come with an education that focuses on:

- Equipping students with the capabilities to navigate seamlessly across linguistic and socio-cultural borders ("Learning about diversity")
- Empowering students to be leaders of their own learning ("Diversity in learning")
- Inspiring students to build and maintain global connections ("Globally informed")
- Instilling a culture of empathy and mutual respect for all students to embrace their unique identity ("Locally rooted")

Our Statement of Values is available at <https://www.abbotsfordps.vic.edu.au/page/82/Our-Values>

### 3. Wellbeing and engagement strategies

Abbotsford Primary School has developed a range of strategies to promote engagement, an inclusive and safe environment, positive behaviour and respectful relationships between all students in our school. *We recognise the*

*importance of student friendships and peer support in helping children and students feel safe and less isolated. We acknowledge that some students may need extra social, emotional or educational support at school, and that the needs of students will change over time as they grow and learn.*

A summary of the universal (whole of school), targeted (year group specific) and individual engagement strategies used by our school is included below:

#### Universal

- high and consistent expectations of all staff, students, parents and carers
- prioritise positive relationships between staff and students, recognising the fundamental role this plays in building and sustaining student wellbeing
- creating a culture that is inclusive, engaging and supportive, embraces and celebrates diversity and empowers all students to participate and feel valued
- welcoming all parents/carers and being responsive to them as partners in learning
- analysing and being responsive to a range of school data, such as attendance, Attitudes to School Survey, parent survey data, student management data and school level assessment data
- teachers at Abbotsford Primary School use the Abbotsford Primary School instructional framework to ensure an explicit, common and shared model of instruction to ensure that evidenced-based, high yield teaching practices are incorporated into all lessons
- teachers at Abbotsford Primary School adopt a broad range of teaching and assessment approaches to effectively respond to the diverse learning styles, strengths and needs of our students and follow the standards set by the Victorian Institute of Teaching
- our school's Statement of Values and School Philosophy are incorporated into our curriculum and promoted to students, staff and parents, so that they are shared and celebrated as the foundation of our school community
- carefully planned transition programs to support students moving into different stages of their schooling
- positive behaviour and student achievement is acknowledged in the classroom, and formally in school assemblies and communication to parents
- monitor student attendance and implement attendance improvement strategies at a whole-school, cohort and individual level
- students have the opportunity to contribute to and provide feedback on decisions about school operations through the Junior School Council. Students are also encouraged to speak with their teachers, School Leadership, Student Wellbeing Coordinator or the Principal whenever they have any questions or concerns.
- create opportunities for cross—age connections amongst students through school plays, athletics, music programs, clubs, competitions and peer support programs
- all students are welcome to self-refer to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator, classroom teacher, School Leadership Team and/or the Principal, if they would like to discuss a particular issue or feel as though they may need support of any kind. We are proud to have an 'open door' policy where students and staff are partners in learning
- we engage in school wide positive behaviour support with our staff and students, which includes programs such as:
  - Respectful Relationships
  - Bully Stoppers
  - Safe Schools
- programs, incursions and excursions developed to address issue specific needs or behaviour (i.e. anger management programs)
- opportunities for student inclusion (i.e. sports teams, clubs, recess and lunchtime activities)
- buddy programs, peer support programs
- measures are in place to empower our school community to identify, report and address inappropriate and harmful behaviours such as racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination or harassment.

## Targeted

- each year group has a Home Group Teacher, who monitors the health and wellbeing of students in their year, and acts as a point of contact for students who may need additional support
- Koorie students are supported to engage fully in their education, in a positive learning environment that understands and appreciates the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture
- our English as a second language students are supported through our EAL program, and all culturally and linguistically diverse students are supported to feel safe and included in our school
- we support learning and wellbeing outcomes of students from a refugee background
- we provide a positive and respectful learning environment for our students who identify as LGBTIQIA+ and follow the Department's policy on [LGBTIQIA+ Student Support](#)
- all students in Out of Home Care are supported in accordance with the Department's policy on [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#) including being appointed a Learning Mentor, having an Individual Education Plan and a Student Support Group (SSG) and being referred to Student Support Services for an Educational Needs Assessment
- students with a disability are supported to be able to engage fully in their learning and school activities in accordance with the Department's policy on [Students with Disability](#), such as through reasonable adjustments to support access to learning programs, consultation with families and where required, student support groups and individual education plans
- wellbeing and health staff will undertake health promotion and social skills development in response to needs identified by student wellbeing data, classroom teachers or other school staff each year
- staff will apply a trauma-informed approach to working with students who have experienced trauma and undergo training in the Berry Street Education Model
- students enrolled under the Department's international student program are supported in accordance with our legal obligations and Department policy and guidelines at: [International Student Program](#)

## Individual

Abbotsford Primary School implements a range of strategies that support and promote individual engagement. These can include:

- building constructive relationships with students at risk or students who are vulnerable due to complex individual circumstances
- meeting with the student and their parent/carer to talk about how best to help the student engage with school
- developing an Individual Education Plan and/or a Behaviour Support Plan
- considering if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up
- referring the student to:
  - school-based wellbeing supports
  - Student Support Services
  - Appropriate external supports such as council based youth and family services, other allied health professionals, Headspace, child and adolescent mental health services or ChildFirst

Where necessary, the school will support the student's family to engage by:

- being responsive and sensitive to changes in the student's circumstances and health and wellbeing
- collaborating, where appropriate and with the support of the student and their family, with any external allied health professionals, services or agencies that are supporting the student
- monitoring individual student attendance and developing an Attendance Improvement Plan in collaboration with the student and their family
- engaging with our regional Koorie Engagement Support Officers
- running regular Student Support Group meetings for all students:
  - with a disability

- in Out of Home Care
- with other complex needs that require ongoing support and monitoring.

For further information please refer to the Department's Policy and Advisory Library:

[Student Support Groups](#)  
[Individual Education Plans](#)  
[Behaviour - Students](#)  
[Behaviour Support Plans](#)  
[Student Support Services](#)

as well as to other Department programs and services such as:

[Program for Students with Disabilities](#)  
[Mental health toolkit](#)  
[headspace](#)  
[Navigator](#)  
[LOOKOUT](#)

#### **4. Identifying students in need of support**

Abbotsford Primary School is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure our students are supported intellectually, emotionally and socially. The Student Wellbeing team plays a significant role in developing and implementing strategies to help identify students in need of support and enhance student wellbeing. Abbotsford Primary School will utilise the following information and tools to identify students in need of extra emotional, social or educational support:

- personal, health and learning information gathered upon enrolment and while the student is enrolled
- attendance records
- academic performance
- observations by school staff such as changes in engagement, behaviour, self-care, social connectedness and motivation
- attendance, detention and suspension data
- engagement with families
- self-referrals or referrals from peers

#### **5. Student rights and responsibilities**

All members of our school community have a right to experience a safe and supportive school environment. We expect that all students, staff, parents and carers treat each other with respect and dignity. Our school's *Statement of Values* highlights the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.

Students have the right to:

- participate fully in their education
- feel safe, secure and happy at school
- learn in an environment free from bullying, harassment, violence, racism, discrimination or intimidation
- express their ideas, feelings and concerns.

Students have the responsibility to:

- participate fully in their educational program
- display positive behaviours that demonstrate respect for themselves, their peers, their teachers and members of the school community
- respect the right of others to learn.

Students who may have a complaint or concern about something that has happened at school are encouraged to speak to their parents or carers and approach a trusted teacher or a member of the school leadership team. Further information about raising a complaint or concern is available in our *Complaints Policy*.

## 6. Student behavioural expectations and management

Behavioural expectations of students are grounded in our school's *Statement of Values*.

Violence, bullying, and other offensive and harmful behaviours such as racism, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated and will be managed in accordance with this policy. Bullying will be managed in accordance with our *Bullying Prevention Policy*.

When a student acts in breach of the behaviour standards of our school community, Abbotsford Primary School will institute a staged response, consistent with the Department's policies on behaviour, discipline and student wellbeing and engagement. Where appropriate, parents will be informed about the inappropriate behaviour and the disciplinary action taken by teachers and other school staff.

Our school considers, explores and implements positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as detention, withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class.

Disciplinary measures may be used as part of a staged response to inappropriate behaviour, in combination with other engagement and support strategies, to ensure factors that may have contributed to the student's behaviour are identified and addressed. Disciplinary measures at our school will be applied fairly and consistently. Students will always be provided with an opportunity to be heard.

Disciplinary measures that may be applied include:

- warning a student that their behaviour is inappropriate
- teacher controlled consequences such as moving a student in a classroom or other reasonable and proportionate responses to misbehaviour
- withdrawal of privileges
- referral to the Student Wellbeing Coordinator
- restorative practices
- behaviour support and intervention meetings
- suspension

Suspension, expulsion and restrictive interventions are measures of last resort and may only be used in situations consistent with Department policy, available at:

- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/suspensions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/expulsions/policy>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/restraint-seclusion/policy>

In line with Ministerial Order 1125, no student aged 8 years or younger will be expelled without the approval of the Secretary of the Department of Education and Training.

The Principal of Abbotsford Primary School is responsible for ensuring all suspensions and expulsions are recorded on CASES21.

Corporal punishment is prohibited by law and will not be used in any circumstance at our school.

Staff are required to manage discipline issues using the 'step' approach within the classroom. These 'steps' will be visible in all learning spaces. (Note: Major or extreme behavioural issues will escalate a student who may not have had a 'Step 1' warning to a Step 4 or 5 depending on the severity of the inappropriate behaviour.)

**'Step' Approach- Behaviour in the Classroom** (Steps' reset at the start of each day)

**Step 1 – Verbal warning (Green)**

**Step 2 – Second verbal warning (Yellow)**

**Step 3 – Isolation in the classroom (Orange)**

This allows students time to regulate their emotions and be ready to re-engage with their learning. This may include a quiet area in the classroom to calm down, or to continue their learning task.

**Step 4 – Student is moved to another class/learning area for 10 minutes (Red)**

This includes students being removed from working with their peers, which often assists a student to calm down, and be ready to re-engage with their learning. Parents will be notified by the teacher who is responsible for the student when the behaviour occurred.

*\*Students who reach this step three times in a week will have a Student Support Group (SSG) meeting organised by the Student Wellbeing Coordinator. A Behaviour Support Plan will be created to support the student.*

**Step 5 – Student removed to Administration**

This removal for a period of time may include the remainder of the learning session. Parents will be notified by the teacher who is responsible for the student when the behaviour occurred.

For behavioural issues in the schoolyard, please see Appendix A - *Process for Behaviour in the Yard*

## **7. Engaging with families**

Abbotsford Primary School values the input of parents and carers, and we will strive to support families to engage in their child's learning and build their capacity as active learners. We aim to be partners in learning with parents and carers in our school community.

We work hard to create successful partnerships with parents and carers by:

- ensuring that all parents have access to our school policies and procedures, available on our school website
- maintaining an open, respectful line of communication between parents and staff, supported by our Communicating with School Staff policy
- providing parent volunteer opportunities so that families can contribute to school activities
- involving families with homework and other curriculum-related activities
- involving families in school decision making
- coordinating resources and services from the community for families
- including families in Student Support Groups, and developing individual plans for students.

## **8. Evaluation**

Abbotsford Primary School will collect data each year to understand the frequency and types of wellbeing issues that are experienced by our students so that we can measure the success or otherwise of our school based strategies and identify emerging trends or needs.

Sources of data that will be assessed on an annual basis include:

- student survey data
- incident data
- school reports
- parent survey

- case management
- CASES21, including attendance and absence data.

Abbotsford Primary School will also regularly monitor available data dashboards to ensure any wellbeing or engagement issues are acted upon in a timely manner and any intervention occurs as soon as possible.

## COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways

- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff induction processes
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Included as an annual reference in the school newsletter
- Made available in hard copy from school administration upon request

Our school will also ensure it follows the mandatory parent/carer notification requirements with respect to suspensions and expulsions outlined in the Department's policies at:

- [Suspension process](#)
- [Expulsions - Decision](#)

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The following Department of Education and Training policies are relevant to this Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy:

- [Attendance](#)
- [Student Engagement](#)
- [Child Safe Standards](#)
- [Supporting Students in Out-of-Home Care](#)
- [Students with Disability](#)
- [LGBTIQ Student Support](#)
- [Behaviour - Students](#)
- [Suspensions](#)
- [Expulsions](#)
- [Restraint and Seclusion](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy:

- *Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy*
- *Bullying Prevention Policy*
- *Inclusion and Diversity Policy*
- *Statement of Values and School Philosophy*

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	Sept 2024
Consultation	School Community via Newsletter – School Council – Junior School Council –
Approved by	Keith McNeil- Principal
Next scheduled review date	Sept 2026



## APPENDIX A

### *Process for Behaviour in the Yard*

At Abbotsford Primary School, we agree that poor behaviours and choices are to be handled in a proactive way. When we observe students making minor poor choices or becoming agitated/upset, we intervene and attempt to calm the situation. When an incident is occurring/has occurred, staff members are to find out as much information as possible about the incident before undertaking the following processes. If unsure, staff members should seek advice from each other before proceeding with these approaches. Any incidents/issues are to be documented on Compass so that we have a consistent record of events and can track individual students' involvement.

	Minor Issue	Major Issue	Extreme Issue
<b>Behaviour</b>	Playing in the toilets, arguments during games, annoying other students, undertaking minor unsafe activities (rough play, play fighting, and throwing sand/bark).	Physical fighting, swearing in a heated argument, chasing after students aggressively, threats of violence.	Premeditated attack (verbal or physical), unprovoked attack (verbal or physical).
<b>Process</b>	Discuss the unacceptable behaviours with the affected students. Reiterate our school values and expectations. A firm verbal warning should suffice. If the behaviour is repeated or another minor incident occurs, the student(s) in question are to walk with the Yard Duty staff, miss out on play and collect rubbish/clean yard (tongs and dustpan and brushes are available in staff room). If it is a conflict in a game, those students are to be removed from the game and/or offending equipment confiscated. Record basic details in Notebook provided.	Send for support from other staff members if required. Offending students are to be separated from each other. The staff member handling the incident is to inform the Primary Welfare Coordinator or a member of the leadership team. They will schedule times for yard removal as a consequence. Juniors for approx. 5 minutes, Middle years for approx. 10 minutes and Seniors for approx. 15 minutes. Classroom teacher to either supervise this time or organise for supervision. Students are to be removed from the yard at separate times if involved in the same incident. Record students and details on Compass.	Send for support from other staff members. Student is to be removed from the yard and the Primary Welfare Officer, or a member of the leadership team is to supervise the student until a family member can collect them from school. The Principal and Primary Welfare Coordinator to determine if suspension is appropriate. They will take into consideration the length of suspension based on the severity of the situation, student history and previous precedents set. Suspension forms are to be completed by the Principal or delegate before the student leaves with parents. Record students and details on Compass.

<b>Follow Up</b>	<p>Inform yard duty staff who are outside during that break time. Inform classroom teacher of incident.</p> <p>Refer to notebook and if consistently repeated incidents with the same child/ren then record on Compass.</p>	<p>Classroom teacher is to be informed by the staff member handling the situation. The classroom teacher is to organise contact with the parents of the students involved prior to dismissal time (if possible).</p>	<p>As for Major Issue. In addition the student and their parent(s) are to have a formal meeting prior to the student returning to class (generally the morning after their suspension period).</p>
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